

cantile business, and there is no use in trying to tie him up to conditions which he cannot fulfil.

Mr. DUFF: There is a more serious side than that which the hon. member for Antigonish (Mr. J. H. Sinclair) has spoken about. The definition of an able seaman is not the definition of an able seaman at all; it is the definition of an ordinary seaman, and the gentleman who completed that classification in regard to able seaman did not know what he was writing when he put that in the book. As regards wages of crews, I understood the minister to say that every ship owned by the Government outside of foreign-going ships would have to pay that rate of wages to the men whether they were ships on the Atlantic coast, the Pacific coast or the Great Lakes. Let me give the minister a concrete case. When the S.S. Stanley, which is one of the Marine Department boats plying on the Nova Scotia coast looking after buoys and lighthouses, arrives at Halifax, the captain pays off his crew, and it is necessary for him to engage a new crew for the next voyage. Supposing an S.O.S. call should come from some ship in distress off the Magdalen islands or off Sable islands, that captain is compelled under the classification to apply to the Civil Service Commission at Ottawa for a crew. That is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of in my life.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: The Act provides for temporary employees, and the captain under those circumstances could engage a crew.

Mr. DUFF: These are not temporary employees. These are very important employees and probably permanent.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I think if S.O.S. calls were being answered, the employees would be temporary.

Mr. DUFF: Not so far as the captain was concerned. Supposing the captain gets sick. Is the captain not a permanent employee? You would not class him as a temporary employee, and the minister would not put aboard that ship as captain a man who was not qualified. Supposing when the S.S. Stanley arrives at Halifax, the captain falls sick and has to go to the hospital, it is necessary for the Civil Service Commission at Ottawa to appoint a captain, and although they are gentlemen who are well qualified in certain respects, they know no more about appointing a captain to a ship than I know about running an aeroplane.

[Mr. J. H. Sinclair.]

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Very little is going to be achieved by a discussion of the details of this classification. It is not a perfect one, I admit. I do not concede that the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Duff) are correct, but I am not in a position to contradict him. He is a little more of a seaman than I am although I do not think he is very well informed as such. Perhaps he knows something more than I do about the matter, and I shall not venture into a contest with him. I do not purpose undertaking the task of advising this House as to the details of the classification, and I consider it is a great waste of public time, if hon. gentlemen will permit me to say so, to be pointing out possible defects in the classification.

Mr. DUFF: Then, how are you going to rectify it?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: This Parliament never undertook to go into the rates of compensation of 50,000 people in the employ of the Government to see whether their duties were or were not properly defined.

We are taking power under the Bill for the Civil Service Commission to amend the classification from time to time, and their recommendations will become effective when approved by the Governor in Council. If the duties of this able seaman, this new personality which my hon. friend (Mr. J. H. Sinclair) has introduced into the discussion, are limited by the definition and ought to be extended, that can be corrected at any time. The definition of duties is only illustrative in every case. I say frankly I do not propose to stand on the floor of the House and attempt to give information that would be at all reliable as to all these details. I do know this: I have heard features of the classification criticised in Parliament and outside of it and in the press, and upon looking into these individual cases I have reached the conclusion that I would take the judgment of the commission and its experts in respect of the qualifications generally before I would the judgment of the people outside, because there are many features in connection with the public service which the general public do not know and cannot possibly know without some investigation into the actual facts. I think the public interests are amply protected by giving the Civil Service Commission power to amend the classification from time to time, and I think we should let it go at that.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: The minister solved the difficulty a few minutes ago by telling